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# Macro-Social Marketing

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## Abstract

*The theoretical underpinnings for the concept of macro-social marketing are provided in this article. Macro-social marketing seeks to use social marketing techniques in a holistic way to effect systemic change, as opposed to individual level change. The article provides the conceptual roots to the concept from systems theory and institutional theory. It starts by explaining what types of macromarketing issues can be approached using macro-social marketing – dubbed here wicked problems. Systems theory is then used to explain the interconnectedness of wicked problems throughout the social and cultural systems, as well as the material environment and marketing system (Dixon 1984). Institutional theory is then applied to explain how systemic change can be brought about through the use of macro-social marketing. Change at a broader conceptual level is discussed, as well as how this process then trickles down to individual organisations within the marketing system. Lastly, tools and tactics are provided for macromarketers to undertake macro-social marketing, organised under an extended marketing mix including the concepts of people, policy and partnership.*

**Keywords:** Macro-social marketing, macromarketing, systems theory, institutional theory, social marketing.

## **Introduction**

Wicked problems are societal problems such as environmental degradation, obesity, or workers rights in developing economies, which are multifaceted and highly complex (Commonwealth of Australia 2007; Kennedy and Parsons 2012). Their complexity goes beyond the realms of social marketing because they are perpetuated by institutionalised behavioural norms, reflecting society's value and belief systems. For instance, the normative behaviours related to the belief that 'value for money' equates to the biggest quantity of a product at the lowest price, regardless of quality. Wicked problems related to such norms often convey an inherent problem with a marketing system where that system preserves those normative behaviours because they have become institutionalised. Thus organisations that express those norms are seen as legitimate and are supported in a potentially negative cycle.

As macromarketers, we are concerned by wicked problems that are perpetuated by marketing systems. While social marketing deals with these issues at a micro and individual level usually, macro-social marketing can be used to deal with them at a macro-level. Macro-social marketing seeks to bring about system wide change through changing the institutional norms that perpetuate the problem (Kennedy and Parsons 2012; Domegan 2008). By reflecting on systems thinking, institutional theory, and social marketing, this article aims to develop our theoretical understanding of macro-social marketing and its process to bring about system wide change.

While the first mentions of macro-social marketing were a number of years ago (Domegan 2008; Wymer 2011), the concept has not been conceptualised adequately. Kennedy and Parsons (2012) use an example of the Canadian government's anti-smoking campaigns to relate the traditional marketing mix to the concept. However they focus on the use of macro-social marketing by governments and do not provide theoretical explanations of how or why macro-social marketing can lead to systemic change.

The contribution of this article then, is in its discussion of the conceptual underpinnings of macro-social marketing and the application of this understanding to provide tactics for macro-social marketers. Specifically the objectives of this article are to conceptualise how and why macro-social marketing can bring about system wide change for a wicked problem. This is achieved through a conceptual discussion of systems thinking, institutional theory, and social marketing using an extended example of a wicked problem. The wicked problem applied here is the textile and clothing industry and the effects of fast fashion. What follows then is a review of macro-social marketing within the social marketing literature and related concepts. Then wicked problems are explained through an extended example of the textile and clothing industry and fast fashion. Systems thinking is then applied before the process for macro-social marketing change is explored using institutional theory. Lastly, tools for macro-social marketers are outlined.

## **Literature Review**

Social marketing, along with other government or community interventions, is most often used to try to effect individual level behaviour change. Social marketing

assumes that an individual can change because they are responsible for themselves, and with intelligent and informed processing will choose to change their behaviour (Hoek and Jones 2011; Wymer 2011). But it has been argued that they do not actually have full information or lack the processing capability in certain situations to make those logical choices. This is especially so for habituated and addictive behaviours such as smoking or those that contribute to obesity (Wayne et al 2004). In many instances such wicked problems are seen to require more than social marketing. Instead needing a more holistic view of the broader environmental and contextual perpetuating factors (Hoek and Jones 2011), and system wide change (Kennedy and Parsons 2012).

Social marketing, as a marketing system (Layton, *forthcoming*), can be applied to global and national level issues and is about changing attitudes, behaviours and beliefs to create societal change (Dibb 2014; Rangun and Karim 1991; French and Blair-Stevens 2006). Social Marketing can be defined as:

*“the adaptation of commercial marketing technologies to the analysis, planning, execution, and evaluation of programs designed to influence the behaviour of target audiences in order to improve their physical and mental wellbeing and or that of the society of which they are a part”* (Andreasen 1993, p. 1).

This includes social ideas that benefit society (Bloom and Novelli 1981). Social marketing can be undertaken by non-profit, profit, and government organizations.

Hastings (2003) and Dibb (2014) note that social marketing should look beyond individual behaviour change to the social and environmental factors that create and perpetuate that behaviour. For instance with more holistic, macro levels of intervention, cross boundary and cross sector interventions (Dibb 2014). Macro-social marketing has been posited to do this (Kennedy and Parsons 2012).

Wymer (2011) has defined macro-social marketing as government led social marketing, while Domegan (2008) defined the term as the use of social marketing by those who shape the social context and seek societal level rather than individual level change. Kennedy and Parsons (2012) add that macro-social marketing is about systemic change rather than individual change. If it is undertaken by governments, then it may consist of systematic sabotage of the elements of the traditional marketing mix for products which support a harmful behaviour (Kennedy and Parsons 2012). Their article looks at how the Canadian government created an environment that supported and facilitated individuals to decrease usage of harmful products such as cigarettes. Thus the concept differs from micro-social marketing which often seeks to create individual level change in attitudes and behaviours by introducing a competing and change inducing product or service (Kotler and Zaltman 1971).

Systems social marketing is a related concept that has been outlined by Hastings and Domegan (2014) and Domegan, Collins, Stead, McHugh and Hughes (2013). They advocate social marketing interventions which are co-created with the targeted community using value co-discovery, design, and delivery. Such community social marketing however focuses more on the value or benefit of the intervention

than the social norms and institutions of macro-social marketing and looks at the knock on effect of individual level change for society.

Kennedy and Parsons' (2012, 2014) conceptualisations of macro-social marketing develop the concept further. However they do not provide the conceptual basis for how or why change occurs and use the traditional 4P marketing mix ignoring the 'uncomfortable relationship' of social marketing with the traditional marketing mix (Hastings 2003). Focusing on macro-social marketing in the context of decreasing usage of products (cigarettes), Kennedy and Parsons (2012) conclude that macro-social marketing in these cases systematically sabotages the efficient use of traditional marketing by companies selling the offending product. Thus, governments are able to influence the societal context of using the offending product. Kennedy and Parsons (2012) show how the Canadian government reduced the efficiency of the 4Ps for tobacco companies, drastically decreasing the number of smokers in Canada. Price was increased through taxation; the number of distribution channels was decreased; product ingredients and variations were regulated; and promotional content, distribution, and targets were restricted.

Kennedy and Parsons (2014) suggest that institutional theory is a base to help us understand how the cultural system changes but do not go into this in detail. They also suggest that macro-social marketing is an avenue to make these changes. Arndt (1981) agrees that an institutional approach is a powerful basis for analysing macromarketing. One of the advantages to incorporating institutional thinking into macro-social marketing is that the key stakeholders become *all* stakeholders and not

only those directly targeted. Societal costs are also considered along with processes of change (Arndt 1981).

Thus the objective for the rest of this article is to discuss the broader system goals of macro-social marketing and the process of change which occurs in order to provide a solid conceptual foundation for this relatively new concept. Institutional theory is used to explain why and how macro-social marketing works within a systems thinking framework for wicked problems. The article then moves to specific tools for macro-social marketers, broadening current conceptualisations from Kennedy and Parsons (2012) to add People, Policy and Partnership to the traditional marketing mix, as suggested is suitable for social marketing (Krisjanous 2014; Gordon 2012; Hastings 2003).

### **Wicked Problems**

Wicked problems are highly complex problems such as obesity, environmental degradation, and the poor conditions of workers in the clothing and textiles industry. In such cases, many stakeholders contribute to, or perpetuate the problem, with multiple levels of interconnecting factors involved. This makes it difficult to define the problem and those within it to target. Also, in implementing interventions, unforeseen side effects may cause more harm. Beyond this they involve vast amounts of stakeholders, over many countries, who may be difficult to reach (Commonwealth of Australia 2007; Kennedy and Parsons 2012). Wicked problems are systemic problems and this article posits that macro-social marketing is an appropriate intervention for such systemic problems. What follows is an example of a wicked problem so these layers may be appreciated. The example used here is of the

textile and clothing industry, due to space it is a brief example and does not claim to cover every single view of the issue, but is meant to give some comprehension and context to the enormity of wicked problems in general (For more thorough examinations please refer to ILO, 2014 and Adhikari and Yamamoto 2005).

The textile and clothing (T&C) industry presents problems for workers, the environment and society. Developing economies are some of the main areas for export including China, India, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and Pakistan (ILO 2014). While the amount produced and exported grows annually, this does not always equate to better working conditions or wages for T&C workers. For instance, in 2006, 2 million workers in Bangladesh earned US \$16 per month (ADB 2006) while in Sri Lanka they received US \$36 a month or less, though the living wage would be between US \$70-85 (Prasanna and Gowthaman 2006). The industry is also plagued by piece-rate practices that mean that workers end up working large amounts of overtime to gain the standard monthly wage. Working conditions are poor, with extremely long hours and abusive practices, often breaching basic human rights (ILO 2014). Apart from poor working conditions and wages (McRobbie 1997; Wilson 1985) the T&C industry contributes to environmental damage (Morgan and Birtwistle 2009), such as from dumping (Adhikari and Weeratunga 2007), waste from the production process, and the mis-use of natural resources due to the 'fast fashion' nature of the industry (McRobbie 1997).

Fast fashion refers to a speeding up of the fashion buying cycle. Where once there would be two collections released a year, with a lead-time between 6 and 12 months, now retailers expect up to 20 collections a year (Birtwistle, Siddiqui and



Fiorito 2003; LeBlanc 2012; ILO 2014). In order to respond to fickle consumer demand and maintain lean retailing strategies, some retailers receive new stock daily or twice weekly at least (Bruce and Daly 2006; Birtwistle et al. 2003). This forces suppliers to be very flexible with their lead-times and encourages sub-contracting and poor working conditions (ILO 2014).

Beyond fast and flexible lead-times, the current fashion climate is also one of low prices. Not only do consumers demand low prices (Tucker 2009), but low profit margins coupled with intense competition also encourage retailers to seek the lowest cost suppliers (Bruce, Daly and Towers 2004; Mattila, King and Ojala 2002; ILO 2014; Ertekin and Atik, *forthcoming*). Retailers' size increase their power in the bargaining process so while retailers do not own their own factories in general, they are powerful enough to still control their suppliers with regards the designs and materials sourced (ILO 2014). Retailers are also preferring to deal with less suppliers, so choose those that can supply large quantities (Gereffi and Frederick 2010), total solution packages – from design through to final product delivery (Adhikari and Yamamoto 2005) - and who are highly responsive with a quick turnaround to support their lean retailing strategies (Bruce and Daly 2006). Such flexible, low cost strategies are inherently unsustainable for suppliers (Tewari 2006).

While suppliers must respond to retailers' requirements, retailers are consumer driven (Gereffi and Frederick 2010) and consumers have a constant need for new things (Fiske 1989). This need feeds fast fashion (Bruce and Daly 2006) with constant additions to product lines, but also creates waste. Cheap, poor quality products produced, due to cost and time restraints on suppliers, breed a disposable lifestyle for

consumers, not only creating waste quicker, but also encouraging obsolescence (Ertekin and Atik, *forthcoming*). Yet consumers often do not realise their impact (Goodwin 2012), or they display an attitude-behaviour gap in their purchasing behaviours (Eckhardt, Belk and Devinney 2010; Connolly and Prothero 2003). While activists such as anti-sweatshop groups target manufacturers, that may be misguided as retailers are meeting consumer demands (Brown, Deardoff and Stern 2004). But, whether retailers or consumers lead the impacts on suppliers, some retail organisations do try to mitigate those issues, through additional supplier requirements. However when organisations implement/require their supply chains to meet codes of conduct with regards worker conditions and wages, or environmental aspects, this increases suppliers' costs and makes them less competitive (Adhikari and Weerantunga 2007). So if a low cost, flexible strategy is still sought by the retailer, suppliers meeting the retailer's ethical standards may not then meet their bottom line requirements.

In the broader economic picture, this is an issue when considering that the T&C industry has been a stepping-stone for many developing economies through industrial development. They face barriers to such economic development though from protectionist forces of competing countries who cite domestic job losses or preferential treatment of even weaker countries as justification. Tariffs are also a barrier with free trade agreements (FTAs) being an answer, though development of countries that are part of FTAs such as Bangladesh with the EU and Mexico with the US have been questioned (Adhikari and Yamamoto 2008). Such suppliers already face internal barriers to productivity and growth due to unskilled workforces (USITC 2004), poor infrastructure in such areas as roads, telecommunications and power

(OECD 2004), limited finance options, and lack of production structure increasing costs of operation and inputs (Adhikari and Yamamoto 2008). Thus workers rights, the environment, and social impacts in the T&C industry presents a very complex, very wicked problem.

To solve such a wicked problem requires a fundamental paradigm shift (Kilbourne, McDonagh and Prothero 1997) such as to slow fashion (Ertekin and Atik, *forthcoming*). Slow fashion considers more sustainable fashion processes by looking at decreasing the speed of the fashion/consumption cycle and addressing issues of workers rights, the environment and other social issues (Pears 2006; Cataldi, Dickson and Grover 2010). Specifically, decreasing the number of collections a year and increasing the quality of fashion garments in order to facilitate consumers buying less, more durable products (Cataldi et al. 2010), at a higher price to support supplier development and worker's rights. It needs to focus on multiple target markets within the system to enable a fundamental change in the institutional norms around fashion (Erekin and Atik 2014). Thus first systems thinking is required (Cataldi et al. 2010) to understand how the marketing system is linked to and influenced by institutional norms. Following a discussion of systems thinking, institutional theory is then used to explain how change in institutional norms occurs and filters through the system. Then the concept of macro-social marketing as a tool for this change is explicated and specific tactics and tools are provided for its use by macro-social marketers.

### **Systems Thinking**

As can be seen from this example, a wicked problem is so complex, it is very hard to approach. This article posits that an approach to such wicked problems is

macro-social marketing, where system wide change is sought through the changing of institutional norms. Such systems thinking is especially important for wicked problems where there are so many interconnected levels of society involved that what to change and in what order becomes overwhelming. Systemic change, for instance, could occur for an issue such as poor working conditions for clothing and textile workers in our example above. This could start with consumers refusing to purchase and use such products. If they were to refuse them, the whole market system for that product would need to change to survive (Hastings and Domegan 2014). But the question from many macromarketers is how to persuade consumers to do so. Further, what about the retailers who are perpetuating such behaviours (or reflecting demand one might argue), how can change be brought about for them? Lastly then, if developing economies rely on such work to progress, what then? The whole marketing system needs to be addressed. Social marketers have focused on individual levels of change but given the complexity of such problems, taking a macro-social marketing approach and focusing on the marketing system is more effective (Kennedy and Parsons 2012).

According to Dixon (1984) we have both social and cultural systems, which interact with the material environment. The cultural system contains the norms, values and rules for behaviour that are used in the social system, where interaction occurs. The economic system is a social system, of which the marketing system is a subsystem (Dixon 1984; Parsons and Shils 1951). Layton (2007) defines a marketing system as:

*“a network of individuals, groups, and or entities linked directly or indirectly through sequential or shared participation in economic exchange that creates,*

*assembles, transforms and makes available assortments of products, both tangible and intangible, provided in response to customer demand.” (p230)*

The marketing system links markets in this endeavour and producing a good consists of a long chain of transactions. In such complex systems as the marketing system then, rules of exchange between these markets, individuals and groups become institutionalised. They are internalised by actors (Carruthers and Babb 2000) and exist outside of the individuals’ actions, as norms from the cultural system (Dixon 1984; Layton, *forthcoming*). Such normative frameworks become especially important as wicked problems include such a number of interactions they become impersonal and require more institutional guidance, as is the case with our example. Thus institutions provide frameworks for behaviour that are normative and present a vehicle to solve social problems. What, how, and how much is exchanged is decided by society and perpetuated through institutions such as the institution of private property or the institution of contracts (Dixon 1984).

Normative frameworks, or institutional norms, are made up of beliefs, practices, codes, values and behaviours (Dixon 1984; Layton, *forthcoming*). Systems are built on these frameworks and so to change the system, we must seek to change the institutional norms of that system (Hastings and Domegan 2014; Dixon 1984). Changes in aspects which make up institutional norms can signal desire for social reform (Krisjanous 2014), and changes in institutional norms will change the functions and outcomes of a system such as the marketing system and the organisations within it (Dixon 1984, Fligstein 1996; Kilbourne et al. 2009; Humphreys 2014). Individuals reinforce or change the informal or formal normative

structure of the system (Giddens 1984). Such normative changes can be formal (laws), informal (social) and philosophical (ideological) institutions and support or impede a marketing system (Mittelstaedt, Kilbourne and Mittelstaedt 2006; Mittelstaedt, Shultz, Kilbourne and Peterson 2014). Macro-social marketing is an avenue for such normative changes to occur. First, how changes in normative frameworks filter through society is explained by using institutional theory before more specific, managerial and implementation aspects of macro-social marketing are discussed.

### **Institutional Theory**

Institutionalisation is the process by which people create a shared reality complete with an agreed set of rules and social norms of behaviour (Scott 1987; 1994; DiMaggio and Powell 1991; DiMaggio 1988). Institutionalised structures consist of norms around acceptable behaviour that are unquestioned (Berger and Luckmann 1967; Zucker 1977). Institutionalisation occurs in each social system including religion, family, and work, with each having its own sets of codes, norms of behaviour, and meaning construction (Hughes 1939; Scott 1987; DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Meyer and Scott 1983). As Dixon (2002) points out, the market is a social institution much as religion, science, and education are institutions. Though meaning systems are not always agreed upon by all members of the society, and disagreement may occur regarding which actors certain aspects apply to (Friedland and Alford 1987). Society is seen here as *“a group of human beings sharing a self-sufficient system of action which is capable of existing longer than the life-span of an individual”* (Aberle et al. 1950, p. 101).

Institutionalisation is different from creating behaviour change through coercion or rationalisation because it imbues value in actions and creates societal norms, which are then taken for granted in their use (Zucker 1983). So where regular micro-social marketing seeks to create behaviour change in individuals, macro-social marketing seeks to institutionalise long-term societal behavioural change, that is, macro-social marketing seeks to create different system wide normative frameworks. The level of institutionalisation can vary, however, and thus the power of the norm and the norm itself can change and vary (Berger and Luckmann 1967). Marketing influences institutions in the cultural system and for the material environment, influencing values too (Dixon 1984). Downstream social marketing is at the individual level or within communities (Carroll, Craypo and Samuels 2000) and it is most effective to ground the social change or attitude change not just within individuals, but those who influence them as well, such as their community (Cronin and McCarthy 2011). Upstream social marketing looks at structural change and environmental context change with lobbying for changes in legislation etc (Clemens, Gernat and Gernat 2001; Moraes, Carrigan and Leek 2010; Hastings 2012). However it has been acknowledged that down, mid and upstream social marketing need to work in tandem for social change to be effective (Dibb 2014). In a more strategic, long sighted way, such as with the use of macro-social marketing.

At the individual level, norms are symbolic systems that order experiences and make them meaningful (Friedland and Alford 1987). Actors in the institutional environment both interpret and create norms (See figure 1). They are also socialised by them and use them to help form their own identities and justify aspects of themselves (Scott 1994). Thus by changing institutional norms, behaviour change can

also be brought about at the individual level. Those individuals also incorporate aspects of the institutional environment into organisational structure informally. While executives or regulatory bodies incorporate them formally. Infusion and imposition of norms onto organisations happens when norms are involuntarily incorporated into the organisation as actors face outside normative pressures and cognitive constraints. Such constitutive and normative rules, dictate the forms and boundaries of appropriate actions for organisations. Formally, regulatory processes could also impose norms on organisational structures without the choice of the participants, or executives could explicitly choose to incorporate them (Scott 1994) such as with their codes of conduct. Through strategic choice or invention, executives look at their institutional environment and choose the aspects of it that are most relevant to their organisation (Williamson 1973; Scott and Meyer 1983; Emery and Trist 1965).

By an organisation conforming to the norms in their institutional environment through both incorporating it into their organisational structure and reflecting it through their actions, the organisation becomes isomorphic with its environment (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Isomorphism with the environment gains legitimacy for the organisation and ensures its survival (Deephouse and Carter 2005; Parsons 1960). Legitimacy ensures survival because it allows the organisation access to adequate resources such as supplies and distribution channels. It also helps the organisation to decouple itself from negative perceptions of its or its subunits day-to-day activities. It further helps the organisation to be spared from close inspection from outside authorities and thus effective evaluation. Lastly, legitimacy gains rituals of confidence, support, and good faith, from actors in the environment (Meyer and



Rowan 1977). So in summary, this section has explained how institutional norms filter through society in broad terms, giving some understanding as to how systemic change could happen if macro-social marketing is successful in changing institutional norms. The next section looks at the content of institutional norms that are available to change.

### ***Institutional Norms***

Scott (1994) posits that there are two types of norms: cultural-moral institutional norms and economic-task norms. Cultural-moral institutional norms are made up of meaning systems and behavioural patterns, representational, constitutive and normative rules and regulatory processes. Representational rules govern how symbols represent aspects of the environment, while constitutive rules dictate what actors are and what they are able to do in the environment. Normative rules govern which actions are appropriate for the actors within an environment (Scott 1994).

[Insert Figure 1 about here]

Lastly, regulatory processes such as laws are used to uphold and specify institutionally created rules (North 1986). Thus cultural-moral institutional norms are made up of meaning systems, symbolic elements and regulatory processes (Scott 1994). Cultural-moral institutional norms may include beliefs about families and communities, as these are usually associated with social arenas of everyday life (Hughes 1939) and can come from the broad and the immediate institutional

environment (Scott 1987). At the broader environmental level, norms are global and general. Thus, they affect organisations implicitly through their internal members (Meyer 1994; Carroll 1987; Zucker 1987). For example norms of human rights that are held globally permeate an organisation when its members also follow those norms.

The second set of norms is named economic-task norms whereby efficiency expectations form their content (Scott and Meyer 1983). Economic-task norms are created due to output of the organisation that can clearly be assessed and evaluated. These norms call for the use of routines and technologies that gain strict output controls for the organisation (Meyer and Rowan 1977). Economic-Task norms also include consumers' economic expectations of organisations, which incorporate aspects specific to the type of organisation. For instance aspects such as location, prices and assortment may be some of the expectations for organisations such as retailers (Arnold, Kozinets and Handelman 2001).

This article posits that institutionalisation is the overall process undertaken in macro-social marketing. In the institutionalisation process, behaviours become internalised as normative. For behaviours to become norms they take on a value beyond that of the original action and become a part of society. This is the aim of macro-social marketing. Thus the macro-social marketer is tasked with expressing new economic-task norms and cultural-moral institutional norms to all actors in the system (organisations, governments, suppliers, retailers, consumers etc) through symbolic and objective performative and institutional actions, until the actors perpetuate the new norms themselves when they are internalised.

Cultural-moral institutional norms that may be sought for the T&C example may surround human rights. To make up these cultural-moral institutional norms, constitutive rules may be that all humans are actors in the institutional environment, and that each person possesses a level of human dignity that gives them a right to a living wage, no matter the state of their economy. Normative rules may then be that each actor should purchase products at a price that allows for each actor to earn a living wage. These may be supported by changes in legislation that support these behaviours through imposition of a living wage, or regulations surrounding organisation's supply chains. These may be represented by symbols of a living wage on products. Economic-task norms that may be sought for the T&C example may surround slow fashion. For instance, measureable aspects could be the price of goods, aspects of sustainability in their production process and supply chain, and the number of collections a year.

What follows is an outline of macro-social marketing and practical suggestions of how the concepts of institutionalisation can be applied to create systemic change.

### **Macro-Social Marketing Tactics**

Macro-social marketing is the use of social marketing techniques to shape the social context of behaviour change (Domegan 2008; Donovan 2011; Kennedy and Parsons 2012). It seeks societal rather than individual behaviour change. As discussed in the introduction, Kennedy and Parsons (2012) considered how a government could sabotage the 4Ps of an offending product. However, multiple authors have pointed

out the inadequacy of directly applying the 4Ps to social marketing (Bloom and Novelli 1981; Peattie and Peattie 2003; Wymer 2011; Lefebvre 2011). This is especially obvious for non-product related goals, such as systemic goals for better working conditions for textiles and clothing workers. For such systemic goals, macro-social marketing needs also to include aspects of People, Policy and Partnership (Stead, Gordon, Angus, and McDermott 2007; Donovan and Henley 2010; Krisjanous 2014). This section broadens the usefulness of macro-social marketing by providing tools and tactics for macro-social marketers based instead on the institutionalisation process and implemented through the use of this extended marketing mix. The example of the T&C industry is used to illustrate each point.

Macro-social marketing can drive institutionalisation of norms through the use of the concepts of product, place, price, promotion, people, partnership and policy. This happens in three stages: the pre-institutional, semi-institutional and full institutional stages. For simplicity and clarity, the example of the T&C industry will be used to illustrate these stages and the economic-task norm of a fair price to support a living wage, and the cultural-moral institutional norm of human rights through a living wage will be focused upon.

### ***The Stages of Institutionalisation***

In the pre-institutional stage, initial efforts are to habituate a new behaviour as a response to an issue. Habituation, refers to the formalisation of thinking that is related to the norm. This makes the norm a taken-for-granted element of an organisation but may not include all organisations in the field. Adopters are seen as homogenous and so only imitation rather than internalisation of the behaviour's is

sought (Berger and Luckmann 1967; Kuhn 2005). Macro-marketing take outs from this stage then are that while each stakeholder group may be addressed in a different way, with an appropriate message, those within the stakeholder group are seen as homogenous. So for instance, the key message for consumers for the cultural-moral institutional norm of human rights and a living wage may be that ‘we are all equal – no matter our economy – support a living wage’. While the economic-task norm’s key message may be ‘price to support a living wage’. As imitation is the goal of this stage, clear behaviours need to be encouraged for each stakeholder group to imitate such as asking about the wage of workers in the supply chain.

In the semi-institutional stage, macro-social marketers seek to objectify behaviours as existing in and of themselves, beyond the individual (Kuhn 2005). The taken-for-granted way of thinking that was introduced in the habitualisation stage, is openly supported and championed by those in the organisation to other organisations in the field. For this to occur, there needs to be some kind of agreement between the actors on the issue and on appropriate responses. This consensus can be gained through evidence from observations, media stories, and research studies, and from looking at other countries that have adopted the same response. Measurement standards and regulatory bodies, as well as award programs are an example of this. A champion, who both defines the problem and those affected by it as well as the accepted response, can also quicken the semi-institutional stage (DiMaggio 1988). It is here that adopters of the behaviours are seen as heterogeneous (Berger and Luckmann 1967), which may be seen in the broadening of target markets and contexts. Thus a retail champion, design champion, celebrity endorsers and supplier champion all need to be sought and related to each target market and sought

behaviour. Community group involvement also internalises norms and helps them to be ‘owned’ by actors.

At the full-institutional stage the behaviours are internalized. That is, they become an expected normative response to the codified situations outlined in the semi-institutional stage (Kuhn 2005). Such sedimentation is where the norm is accepted throughout the organisational field and is present for an extended period of time (Tolbert and Zucker 1999). Groups lobbying for the acceptance and institutionalisation of the norm may affect this. This sedimentation occurs when the response to codified situations lasts over generations and becomes a normative response (Berger and Luckmann 1967). However, the level of institutionalisation can vary and change (Berger and Luckmann 1967). Tactics for macro-social marketing based on the concepts of product, place, price, promotion, people and partnership are now expanded upon with policy approaches presented in each section. Notwithstanding the debate in social marketing regarding the applicability of the 4Ps (Gordon 2012; Peattie and Peattie 2003), they are used here to clarify tactics for macro-social marketers but extended to incorporate the nature of the goals of macro-social marketing as deemed appropriate in the literature (Hastings and Domegan 2014).

### ***Product***

In our example, we might encourage people to purchase products that are sold at fair prices. In non-product situations, social marketing tools are auxiliary products that help individuals undertake sought behaviours (Lefebvre 2011). Ideas must be

packaged attractively for the target audiences. So even if the core product is an idea such as “fair prices” or “a living wage”, auxiliary products and services contribute to its acceptance (e.g. pamphlets, education programs, websites). Whether core products are beliefs, values or behaviours, auxiliary products must cater to specific target markets (Kotler and Zaltman 1971) such as for retailers, consumers or suppliers in our example. This helps us to understand how to express the first habituation stage as well. At that stage, people and organisations are treated as homogenous and so imitation is sought as the behavioural outcome. Thus by increasing the usage of acceptable products (those that are made with fair working conditions and sold at fair prices) by imitation of celebrities or key members of society, this may occur. Other imitative actions could also include checking the supply chain of products, or boycotting non-conforming products. Policy may also be introduced limiting sourcing of products from places without living wages (Kennedy and Parsons 2012).

So, in summary, macro-social marketing can use the product concept in three ways:

- 1) to increase the usage of a product (e.g. fair cost clothing),
- 2) to decrease the use of a product by limiting the tactics of offending marketers (e.g. sourcing of products), or
- 3) to support the adoption of the sought behaviour through the creation of auxiliary products (e.g. games, pins, helplines, and programs).

### ***Place***

If the outcome of micro-social marketing is to increase the use of a product, then distribution needs to be aligned with this goal. In macro-social marketing, regulatory practices can restrict distribution (Kennedy and Parsons 2012). If auxiliary

products are being used, then people must be told how to obtain them and what actions constitute a purchase (Kotler and Zaltman 1971). Thus we may talk of creating accessibility to the interventions or distribution of tangible products (Peattie and Peattie 2003). Considering the objectification of the sought behaviour in the institutionalisation paradigm, place can also be seen as “*creating access and opportunities to perform...behaviours*” (Lefebvre 2011, p. 63; Bloom and Novelli, 1981). Looking at the place concept from this institutional viewpoint then, the number of contexts for the sought behaviour would be expanded (Stead et al. 2007). Expanding the contexts for the behaviour helps to separate the original value from the behaviour. This provides an overarching system of responses that correspond to the value where myriad contexts and responses will inform normative responses in the future when the value is internalised. Thus the types of products scrutinised for fair pricing, or number of retailers included could be increased. Other aspects of the slow fashion movement could also be introduced, such as alternative places for the normative behaviour to occur. For instance, introducing swapping parties and clothing recycling bins in more places, provide different contexts for people to support the underlying norms (Ertekin and Atik, *forthcoming*).

So again in summary, the place concept can be used in macro-social marketing to:

- 1) increase the effectiveness of distribution for the products to be adopted (e.g. fair cost clothing),
- 2) decrease the effectiveness of distribution for an offending product (e.g. by increasing regulations on their import),
- 3) increase the availability of supporting, auxiliary products that help behaviour change (e.g. information, education, hotlines and programs),



- 4) or increase the number of contexts for undertaking the sought behaviour and for externalising the value (e.g. purchase of goods, support of stores, wearing of clothes, introducing the slow fashion principles such as swapping etc).

### ***Price***

Kennedy and Parson's (2012) conceptualise price in macro-social marketing as something the government could increase, such as by taxes on cigarettes, to reduce sales of an offending product. Price in social marketing does not just mean the monetary outlay to buy a product, but also includes time, energy and social/psychological costs of obtaining or not obtaining a product or undertaking a behaviour (Kotler and Zaltman 1971). As Bloom and Novelli (1981) note, the concept of setting price to maximise profits is not beneficial in social marketing where the focus is usually on decreasing costs of involvement with the issue. Thus the cost of behaviour change should really be considered more than price (Peattie and Peattie 2003). Rewards and punishments are contributors to the costs of undertaking/refraining from, a behaviour (Lefebvre 2011). So while increasing the price of an offensive product (e.g. fast fashion) is an approach for behaviour change, decreasing the price of a sought product is also an option for macro-social marketers (e.g. sustainably produced clothing).

Linking this back to institutional theory, we can see that as a behaviour becomes fully institutionalised, the social cost of not undertaking the normative behaviour increases, perpetuating the norm (Berger and Luckmann 1967).

Alternatively the positive value can also be emphasised as outlined by Hastings and

Domegan (2014) for system social marketing. So, the functional or performative costs/benefits of fairly priced clothes lasting longer; the emotional or sensory costs/benefits of wearing less mass merchandised clothing or supporting human rights and the living wage; social benefits or costs of purchasing/not purchasing and the effects of this on a persons self identity and esteem (Smith and Colgate 2007).

So options for using the concept of price in macro-social marketing are:

- 1) to decrease the monetary, social, functional, emotional and temporal costs of products that are to be adopted (e.g. fairly priced clothing),
- 2) to increase the monetary, social, functional, emotional and temporal costs of obtaining offending products (e.g. fast fashion),
- 3) to increase the cost of not undertaking the behaviour (in normative controls) or provide rewards for undertaking the behaviour (eg awards and other public recognition).

### ***Promotion***

Promotion is possibly the most straightforward of the 4Ps in micro-social marketing (Peattie and Peattie 2003). In macro-social marketing, Kennedy and Parsons (2012) showed how the effectiveness of promotion was decreased because of restrictions on tobacco companies' activities as one use of this concept. Acceptance of auxiliary products can be increased through advertising, personal selling, publicity, and other promotional activities as well (Kotler and Zaltman 1971). Social marketing promotion can also be used to communicate knowledge of product, price, and place (Lefebvre 2011).

The transfer and communication process for cultural moral and institutional norms can also be applied here. As the institutional environment is both symbolic and behavioural (objective), norms can be communicated both symbolically and behaviourally (Hughes 1939). They can also be communicated through symbolic objects (Berger and Luckmann 1966). Expressions of cultural-moral institutional norms are either through symbolic or objective institutional actions. For instance human rights through a living wage could be conveyed through an objective institutional action such as support of the ILO, or symbolically through showing workers in developing nations with good working conditions in advertising.

Expressions of economic-task norms are through symbolic or objective performative actions (Arnold et al. 2001). Examples of this process of communication may include such economic-task norms as a fair price or sustainable production processes. These norms may be reflected through objective performative actions such as actually having fair prices and sustainable practices and communicating these. It can be communicated symbolically through symbolic objects and metaphors, slogans or signs in store on posters and displays as well as in advertising out of the store (Suchman 1995 with examples from Arnold et al. 2001). For example a shelf display may present the message “fair price” or “sustainably sourced”.

Thus, the promotion mix can be used in macro-social marketing:

- 1) to sell a product (e.g. fair price clothing)
- 2) to communicate the norms (e.g. living wage)
- 3) to decrease the effectiveness of an offensive product’s use of promotion by regulation (e.g. for fast fashion).

- 4) to sell auxiliary products (hotlines, programs) and their acceptance, and
- 5) in support of the other parts of the extended marketing mix.

### ***People, Partnership and Policy***

People, Partnership and Policy are the other three aspects needed for institutionalisation (Donovan and Henley 2010). While policy has been discussed through each of product, place, price and promotion, people refers to the community and is especially important in the semi-institutional stage. At the semi-institutional stage, the behaviours that have been suggested and imitated in the pre-institutional stage now need to exist outside of the actors. One step to this is through actor 'buy in' through community projects and bottom up interventions (Hastings and Domegan 2014; Domegan et al. 2013). For instance with our example this may be with creating community groups around some of the aspects of slow fashion, such as creating your own clothes, or swapping clothes (Ertekin and Atik, *forthcoming*). Partnership refers to the multiple groups that are involved in such a process and speaks to the challenge of changing a system. Macro-social marketers are not the only group to facilitate change, and thus other groups need to be brought in. For instance this may be with lobby groups, the ILO, or workers unions in our example. Further, partnership with educational agencies, regulatory bodies and the media will ensure the diffusion of norms.

### **Conclusion**

In summary, macro-social marketing's goal is to change the institutional norms surrounding an issue so that systemic change may take place. This requires a

holistic, system wide view of the issue and is most suitable for wicked problems. This article's objective was to provide a conceptual theoretical basis to macro-social marketing in order to explain why and how it can bring about system wide change. It has done that using systems thinking and institutional theory. It is hoped that such a conceptual basis will encourage further empirical work in the area.

This article has provided some examples of its application, but it is noted that the examples are not exhaustive and deserve future research. As macromarketers, we also must be wary of the implementation of macro-social marketing. Gurrieri, Previte and Brace-Goven (2013) find that social marketing is able to transmit dominant ideologies such as those associated with body image and discussed the potential for negative outcomes of these transfers of norms. Thus, it is still the role of macro-marketers to do as Dholakia (1984) did and assess the 'social, legal and political rationality' behind macro-social marketing interventions as well as their processes for arriving and obtaining outcomes (Chaganti 1981) and any unintended effects. Specifically, macro-marketers must be wary of macro-social marketing being part of social engineering (Kennedy and Parsons 2014). Thus future research looking into the measurement of aspects of the full-institutionalisation stage and weighing the ethics of such a process by a governing body is also encouraged.

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